Irish Lyrics and Ballads

JAMES B. DOLLARD

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IRISH LYRICS AND BALLADS

James B. Dollard

Irish Lyrics and Ballads

BY

REV. JAMES B. DOLLARD
LITT. D.

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PREFACE

IN this book of poems the Author's aim is to represent in poetic form the three phases of imaginative experience that come to a man of dreamy and sympathetic mind, living in Ireland.

There is an atmosphere of strange enchantment at all times among the Irish glens and hills, particularly at evening or night-time, when a huge, mystic moon gazes solemnly at one, from the summit of some historic mountain, through the broken windows of an ancient tower! It is quite easy to believe in the existence of the People of the Sidhe — the Fairies — at such a moment, and the prehistoric *Raths*, or Fairy Mounds, in whose depths they still love to dwell, are pointed out on all sides, crowned with their almost impervious thickets of silver hazel and magic white-thorn! This phase of his acquired knowledge is partially covered by the poems included under the heading — "The Horns of Elfland."

In the next place he will come to understand and to love the charm of the Irish people themselves, and to feel the strange and intimate influence of the glens and mountains in which they live. He will grow to appreciate the peasantry and to share with them in their joys and their griefs. His attitude towards them is interpreted

in the series of poems under the heading — "In the Shadowy Glens."

Lastly, as he travels around the country, and comes upon the places whose names are celebrated in the weird, immemorial legends of the Red Branch, the Cuchulain Saga, of Fin, and Ossian, and Dhiarmuid of the Love Spot; when he visits "purple Slieve-na-mon" and the hill of Allen, Tailtea and Tara, Emania and Cashel of the Kings, he will find his soul under the spell of ancient Eire and of her godlike heroes the glory of whose exploits has been handed down to us by the Bards and Seanachies. Some of the knowledge which he obtains from this legendary phase is placed under the heading — "The Ancient Celtic Glamour."

The writer is well aware that many of the subjects touched herein cannot be properly felt or appreciated except by persons of Celtic blood, with Celtic souls vibrant to the mysteries of the spirit-world, and of that region which borders on it, the home of the enchanted imagination.

But the Celtic blood is by this time so intermingled with the other races that there is little likelihood of these themes being unappreciated if the author has been successful in his literary presentation of them.

TORONTO, CANADA, *October 8, 1917*

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"THE HORNS OF ELFLAND"

THE SILVER ANVILS

THERE was a rath I used to love, in Ireland long ago,
An ancient dun in which they dwelt — the Fairy Folk, you know.
All belted round with hawthorn was this Rath of Closharink,
And one could hear, when straying near, their silver anvils clink!

O, clink, clank, clink — hear the fairy hammers go;
Clink, clank, clink, in their caves of gold below!
What were they a-forging in the dun of Closharink
Upon their silver anvils tapping — clink, clank, clink?

When all the thorn was blossomed white, and yellow was the furze,
You'd hear them in the noonday hush when ne'er a linnet stirs;
You'd hear them in the evening when the sun began to sink,
And purple glory flushed the hills that smiled on Closharink.

O, clink, clank, clink, hear the fairy hammers sound —
Clink, clank, clink, in their forges underground;

THE SILVER ANVILS

What were they a-patterning, the Sidhe of Closharink,
With all their silver anvils sounding — clink, clank, clink?

What were they a-fashioning — a crown for great Queen Mave;
A helmet for Cuchulain, or a shield for Lugh the Brave; —
A scabbard for the Sword of Light that flames on danger's brink,
A jeweled torque for Angus who is king at Closharink?

Clink, clank, clink, like a harp note, sweet and low,
Clink, clank, clink, and a big moon climbing slow!
Though youth is far from me to-night, and far is Closharink,
My senses thrill to hear it still, that clink, clank, clink!

THE FAIRY HARPERS

AS I walked the heights of Meelin on a tranquil
autumn day,
The fairy host came stealing o'er the distant
moorland gray,
I heard like sweet bells ringing,
Or a grove of linnets singing,
And the haunting, wailful music that the Fairy
Harpers play!

Like thunder of deep waters when vast-heaving
billows break,
Like soughing of the forest when ten thousand
branches shake,
Like moaning of the wind,
When the night falls bleak and blind,
So wild and weird the melodies the fairy minstrels
make.

The sunbeams fleck'd the valley, and the cloud-
shades ranged the hill,
The thistle-down scarce drifted in the air so calm
and still.
But along the slopes of Meelin,
Came the ghostly music pealing,
With sad and fitful cadences that set my soul
a-thrill!

Then wan and wistful grew the sky o'er Meelin's
summit lone,
And weeping for the days gone by, my heart grew
cold as stone,
For I heard loved voices calling
Beyond the sunlight falling
On Meelin's mournful mountain where the magic
Harps make moan!

BALLAD OF THE BANSHEE

BACK thro' the hills I hurried home
Ever my boding soul would say: —
"Mother and sister bid thee come,
Long, too long has been thy stay."

Stars shone out, but the moon was pale,
Touched by a black cloud's ragged rim,
Sudden I heard the Banshee's wail
Where Malmor's war-tower rises grim!

Quickly I strode across the slope,
Passed the grove and the Fairy Mound
(Gloomy the moat where blind owls mope)
Scarcely breathing, I glanced around!

Mother of mercy! there she sat,
A woman clad in a snow-white shroud,
Streamed her hair to the damp moss-mat,
White the face on her bosom bowed!

"Spirit of Woe," I eager cried,
"Tell me none that I love has gone,
Cold is the grave:" my accents died —
The Banshee lifted her face so wan.

Pale and wan as the waning moon,
Seen when the sun-spears herald dawn!
Ceased all sudden her dreary croon
Full on my own her wild eyes shone!

BALLAD OF THE BANSHEE

Burned and seared my inmost soul
(When shall sorrow depart from me?)
Black-winged terror upon me stole,
Blindly gaping, I turned to flee!

Back by the grove and haunted mound,
O'er the lone road I know not how,
Hearkened afar my baying hound
Home at last by the low hill's brow!

Lone the cottage — the door flung wide,
Four lights burned — oh, sight of dread!
Breathing a prayer, I rushed inside,
"Mercy, God!" 'twas my mother dead!

Dead and white as the fallen leaf,
(Kneeling, my sister prayed near by),
Wild as I wrestled with my grief,
Far and faint came the Banshee's cry!

THE PASSING OF THE SIDHE

THERE is weeping on Cnoc-Aulin, and on hoary
Slievenamon,
There's a weary wind careering over haggard
Knock-naree,
By the broken Mound of Almhin
Sad as death the voices calling,
Calling ever, wailing ever, for the passing of the
Sidhe.

Where the hunting-call of Ossian waked the woods
of Glen-na-mar;
Where the Fianna's hoarse cheering silenced noisy
Assaroe;
Like the homing swallows meeting —
Like a beaten host retreating —
Hear them sobbing as they hurry from the hills
they used to know.

There's a haunted hazel standing on a grim and
gloomy scaur,
Tossing ceaselessly its branches, like a keener o'er
the dead;
Deep around it press the masses
Of the Sluagh-Sidhe [1] that passes
To the moan of fairy-music timing well their
muffled tread.

[1] Pronounced Slua Shee— the Fairy Army.

THE PASSING OF THE SIDHE

Came a wail of mortal anguish o'er the night-
enshrouded sea,
Sudden death o'ertook the aged, while the infant
cried in fear,
And the dreamers on their pillows
Heard the beat of bursting billows,
And the rumble and the rhythm of an army
passing near!

They have left the unbelieving — past and gone
their gentle sway,
Lonely now the rath enchanted, eerie glen, and
wild crannoge,
But the sad winds unforgetting
Call them back with poignant fretting,
Snatching songs of elfin sorrow from the streams of
Tir-na-n'og!

THE HAUNTED HAZEL

ADOWN a quiet glen where the gowan-berries glisten
And the linnet, shyest bird of all, his wild note warbles free;
Where the scented woodbine-blossoms, o'er the brooklet, bend to listen,
There stands upon a mossy bank, a white-hazel tree.

Oh! fair it is to view, when the zephyr rustles lightly,
And warm sunlight glances back from polished bole and branch;
For then like wavelets on a rill the pendent leaves flash brightly,
And daisies nod in concert, round the column straight and staunch.

But when the day is ended, and the solemn moon is shining;
And shadows grim and ghostly, fall on grove and glen and lea,
Then godless elves their fairy paths with glow-worm lamps are lining,
And potent spells of magic bind this white-hazel tree!

For from their gorgeous palaces the fairy bands
come stealing,
To dance in sportive circles on the never bending
moss;
And the velvet-soft caressing of their finger-
touches healing,
Brings to the sere white-hazel bark again its youth-
ful gloss.

And round and round they skip and glide, in
strange fantastic measure,
To weird, unhallowed melodies of fairy minstrelsy,
Yet mortal ear may never hear those sounds of
elfin pleasure,
And no whisper of its secrets gives the white-hazel
tree!

But should the peasant wander nigh that baleful
bower, unthinking,
And sudden feel the chilling of the haunted hazel's
shade,
A nameless horror seizes on his spirit, bowed and
shrinking,
And making oft the Holy Sign, he hurries home dis-
mayed.

For maid that treads the path of doom beneath
the hazel's shadow,
Shall be the bride of Death, they say, before a
month has flown;

And laughing swain, in pride of strength, who crossed at eve the meadow,
Shall moulder 'neath the matted moss, e'er yet that mead is mown!

So, in the solemn hours of night the fairies dance unharmed,
Till thro' gray dawn the haggard moon her waning span doth dree,
Then from the blessed sunbeam flies the evil power that charmed,
And fairy spell is lifted from the white-hazel tree!

MEELIN MOUNTAIN

ON the slopes of Meelin Mountain 'tis as lonesome as can be,
Up among the whins and heather where our little cottage stands
And all night I hear the wailing
Of the homeless curlews sailing
And the ever-haunting rhythm of the marching Fairy bands.

They are marching down from Meelin to the darkling vales below,
Like an army off to battle — massed in squadron and platoon —
I can see their lances gleaming
And their rustling banners streaming,
While ten thousand silvern helmets shame the lustre of the moon.

They are passing down from Meelin to the Rath of Glen-na-shee
Down the lonely mountain roadway by the Ridge of Moonamoe;
And their Harpers all are playing
Fairy tunes that set you swaying,
Fairy strains that thrill the spirit with the spells of long ago!

MEELIN MOUNTAIN

Who is brave enough to follow where the solemn
night-winds call?
Who will join them down from Meelin in the
moonbeams falling white?
All his earthly woes shall leave him,
Human sorrows never grieve him,
And the Fairy Harps shall lull him evermore
with strange delight!

They are marching down from Meelin, stepping
fast before the dawn,
Fainter grows the Fairy Music, dying plaintive
on the blast,
And I ponder by the embers
While my tristful soul remembers
All the magic of lost visions — all the dreams of
youth long-passed!

THE FAIRY PIPER

ONE evening as I wandered by the Rath of Ross-
na-Ree
I met a fairy piper and he quaintly winked at me;
Said he, "You love our people and you sing their
praise so fine
That just by way of a reward you'll listen now to
mine."

His coat was red, and amber-barred, his panta-
loons were blue,
His eyes were black as ripened sloes, and they were
dancing too,
His pipes were gold and ivory, his chanter jewelled
strange,
And when the first wee note he struck, the world
began to change!

For all the birds in Ossory they gathered round us
there,
And every songster joined with him in chorus
sweet and rare,
Till my poor heart revived anew and lost its bur-
den sad,
And once again came rapture true, like when I
was a lad.

A rose-red flush lit up the skies and tinged the
dappled green,

And seated on a sapphire throne I saw the Fairy Queen;
And all the Red Branch heroes clad in armor dazzling bright
Lined up around the fairy mound; it was a splendid sight!

Then suddenly an elfin door oped wide in Ross-na-Ree,
A spell of gladness held the earth, and swayed each flow'r and tree,
And out there trooped the Fairy Folk, ten thousand strong if one,
All dancing in the sunshine, round about their haunted dun!

The hours flew by like moments, and the daylight faded soon,
Yet still went on that wondrous dance beneath a mystic moon;
My eyes grew dim with happiness, but when I gazed once more,
The vision all had vanished and the fairy spell was o'er!

Yet often since, in gladsome dream, I hear that piper play,
And feel again the rapture of that blissful summer day,
And often, too, I wander by the Rath of Ross-na-Ree,
Though now I know its magic door will ope no more to me!

AT DEAD O' THE NIGHT, ALANNA

AT dead o' the night, alanna, I wake and see you there,
Your little head on the pillow, with tossed and tangled hair;
I am your mother, acushla, and you are my heart's own boy,
And wealth o' the world I'd barter to shield you from annoy.

At dead o' the night, alanna, the heart o' the world is still,
But sobbing o' fairy music comes down the haunted hill;
The march o' the fairy armies troubles the peace o' the air.
Blest angels, shelter my darling for power of a mother's pray'r!

At dead o' the night, alanna, the sleepless Banshee moans,
Wailing for sin and sorrow, by the Cairn's crumbling stones,
At dead o' the night, alanna, I ask of our God above,
To shield you from sin and sorrow, and cherish you in His love.

AT DEAD O' THE NIGHT, ALANNA

At dead o' the night, alanna, I wonder o'er and
o'er,
Shall you part from our holy Ireland, to die on a
stranger shore?
You'll break my heart in the leaving like many a
mother I know —
Just God, look down upon Erin and lift her at
last from woe!

At dead o' the night, alanna, I see you in future
years,
Grand in your strength, and noble, facing the wide
world fears;
Though down in the mossy churchyard my bones
be under the sod,
My spirit shall watch you, darling, till you come
to your rest in God!

BY LIGHT O' THE MOON

By light o' the moon at the gray cairn-stone
A wondrous sight you'll see;
By light o' the moon when the Banshee's croon
Faint comes o'er moor and lea!
Weird cloud-shades hurry athwart the sky,
The drowsy glens are still,
And the march you'll see, of the Sluag-Sidhe
By light o' the moon on the hill!

By light o' the moon you'll hearken soon,
Strange music throbbing sweet,
The harp-notes bold of the Bards of old
Your tranced ear shall greet!
For theirs are the plans of the mystic ranns
By the fairies filched away,
And they echo still on the moonlit hill
Where the elfin minstrels play.

By the light o' the moon, as the reed-pipes croon,
The fairy hosts are seen;
And gallant and gay is their proud array
With glint of shield and skian!
They wage once more, in mimic war,
Fierce fights of the days long o'er,
When the Finian sword by Erna's ford,
The "ridge of battle" up-bore!

BY LIGHT O' THE MOON

By light o' the moon at the gray cairn-stone
The fairy minstrels weep,
And the melting tone of their sorrows' moan
The winds of Erin keep.
They weep her Harpers dead and gone,
Whose strains would haunt and thrill,
They mourn and wail o'er the doom of the Gael,
By the light o' the moon on the hill!

CNOC–AULINN

I LEAVE my parents in Kilmacowen,
My loving cousins in Ard-na-Grange,
For o'er the mountains I must be goin',
Where fairy voices all bid me range!
Beyond those hill-tops fair visions shimmer,
Bright with the sun, an' the water fallin'.
Good-bye, Moondharrig! each moment dimmer,
I fly forever to far Cnoc-Aulinn.

Weary am I o' the wordy clatter,
The busy tongue an' the sordid mind.
The world which seemed a mighty matter
Fades as I leave it far behind;
I leave my plough in the grassy furrow,
My patient horse in the headland stallin'.
Good-bye, Gurthlawhan; for ere to-morrow
I'll walk with Oscar on old Cnoc-Aulinn!

There shall I listen to drowsy waters,
And magic tones o' the Keol-Sidhe —
Hear Bardic rannin' of ancient slaughters
And Finn's Dord-Fiann o'er Knoc-na-righ.
With kings of old I shall be reclinin',
In pleasant dreamin' fond scenes recallin',
While shamrocks there at my feet entwinin',
Shall bless my slumbers on gray Cnoc-Aulinn.

IN THE SHADOWY GLENS

SONG OF THE LITTLE VILLAGES[1]

THE pleasant little villages that grace the Irish glynns
Down among the wheat-fields — up amid the whins,
The little white-walled villages crowding close together,
Clinging to the Old Sod in spite of wind and weather:
Ballytarsney, Ballymore, Ballyboden, Boyle,
Ballingarry, Ballymagorry by the Banks of Foyle,
Ballylaneen, Ballyporeen, Bansha, Ballysadare,
Ballybrack, Ballinalack, Barna, Ballyclare.

The cosy little villages that shelter from the mist,
Where the great West Walls by ocean-spray are kissed;
The happy little villages that cuddle in the sun
When blackberries ripen and the harvest work is done.
Corrymeela, Croaghnakeela, Clogher, Cahirciveen,
Cappaharoe, Carrigaloe, Cashel and Coosheen,
Castlefinn and Carrigtohill, Crumlin, Clara, Clane,
Carrigaholt, Carrigaline, Cloghjordan and Coolrain.

[1] All the names are genuine.

SONG OF THE LITTLE VILLAGES

The dreamy little villages, where by the fire at night,
Old Shanachies with ghostly tale the boldest hearts affright;
The crooning of the wind-blast is the wailing Banshee's cry,
And when the silver hazels stir they say the fairies sigh.
Kilfenora, Kilfinnane, Kinnity, Killylea,
Kilmoganny, Kiltamagh, Kilronan and Kilrea,
Killashandra, Kilmacow, Killiney, Killashee,
Killenaule, Killmyshall, Killorglin and Killeagh.

Leave the little villages, o'er the black seas go,
Learn the stranger's welcome, learn the exile's woe,
Leave the little villages, but think not to forget;
Afar they'll rise before your eyes to rack your bosoms yet.
Moneymore, Moneygall, Monivea and Moyne,
Mullinahone, Mullinavatt, Mullagh and Mooncoin,
Shanagolden, Shanballymore, Stranorlar and Slane,
Toberaheena, Toomyvara, Tempo and Strabane.

On the Southern Llanos, — north where strange light gleams,
Many a yearning exile sees them in his dreams;
Dying voices murmur (passed all pain and care),
"Lo the little villages, God has heard our prayer."

SONG OF THE LITTLE VILLAGES

Lisdoonvarna, Lissadil, Lisdargan, Lisnaskea,
Portglenone, Portarlington, Portumna, Portmagee,
Clondalkin and Clongowan, Cloondara and Clonae,
God bless the little villages and guard them night and day!

BALLAGH GAP

BALLAGH GAP, and the spring sun shining
On Leinster's valleys far down below;
Ballagh Gap, and the hedges lining
The roadways, blossomed like sifted snow!

'Tis there I'd be with Youth's comrades playing,
In gladness maying through sweet lost days,
The gold-eyed primrose green banks arraying,
And daisies spangled in faerie maze.

Again I'd hear, as the wind came sighing
Across Mount Leinster and brown Creev-roe,
The plovers fluting when day was dying
And all the west was a magic glow.

'Tis there I'd be when the sun, new-risen,
Brought vales Elysian to raptured eyes,
And the spirit saw, from its clayey prison,
God's hand bedizen the seas and skies.

Too soon, alas, from these fair scenes banished,
The friends of Boyhood all passed away,
And Youth's fond hoping too quickly vanished
In grief and groping when skies were gray.

Yet I still have visions that flash and quiver —
Dark gloom can never my soul enwrap —
For I see God's sunshine pour down forever
A golden river o'er Ballagh Gap!

ON ARRAN SHORE

BESIDE a white-walled cabin on the cliff
She stands, and gazes on the cruel wave;
Her hands are rough; her old face lined with grief;
The sons she loved so well
Lie drowned beneath the plangent ocean swell —
How dark and cold a grave!

The curraghs straggle in across the bar,
And many a happy mother hails them there,
The fisher lads home-coming from afar;
But now none comes to greet
The lonely widow who with dragging feet
Steals to her cabin bare!

There is a Mother in the Heavens high
Who comforts the bereft and broken heart;
And when at night the wind goes whimpering by,
And sobs the pitying rain;
When voices of the dead are heard again,
Mary doth peace impart!

RIDERS TO THE SEA

ACROSS the bleak, wind-weary Erris plain
Low trailing mists their ghostly banners fly;
Like Druid hosts the legions of the rain
Sweep to the spectral sea,
Whose ashen billows thunder mournfully
Beneath a lowering sky!

Blue turf-smoke rises from a cabin there
Close by the shore where falls the salty spray;
An aged mother, and two sisters fair
Are "caoining" for their dead!
Three brothers strong who fought the sea for bread
Have met their doom to-day!

And thus the anguished mother maketh wail:
"Now all my sons lie in the waters drowned —
'Tis now I shall have rest and peace! The gale
Will not my soul affright!
While wind and wave are battling all the night
Deep will I sleep, and sound!"

IRELAND'S MISTY HILLS

LET travelers prate of the Rockies great
Or the Alleghanies blue,
Or sights recall of the Andes tall
That sentinel Peru;
Of the Urals gray or the Himalay
Where God's white daylight spills —
My fancy flies to the sea-warm skies
And Irelands misty hills!

With Druid cloud-belt girded on
They lift their shoulders brown —
The Galtees, Toomies, Slieve-na-mon,
Slieve Donard, Knoc-Mel-Dhown;
And Kerry's Reek with tow'ring peak
The homing exile thrills,
When high and brave above the wave
Rise Ireland's misty hills!

The gorse is gold where heroes bold
Of old were wont to stray;
Where Finn and Ossian through the wold
Went hunting day by day;
Where Fergus and Cuhoolin trod
Beside the wandering rills,
And good St. Patrick blessed the sod
On Ireland's misty hills!

IRELAND'S MISTY HILLS

No coward slaves have made their graves
  Upon these heathery heights,
Where king and kerne in battle stern
  Have bled for Erin's rights!
The wind that through her ancient tow'rs
  In mournful accent shrills,
Shouts ranns of pride for the brave who died
  On Ireland's misty hills!

May combats cease; and love and peace
  In that fair Island dwell;
Each race and creed, in the country's need
  Her patriot anthems swell!
May North and South together band
  To banish age-long ills,
And all her clans undaunted stand
  For Ireland's misty hills!

MAURYA BAWN

WAKE up, wake up, alanna, Maurya Bawn,
Maurya Bawn!
(Hush! do not weep, *mo creevin*, in the dawn!)
Your father must be goin' from the place he called
his own,
For the landlord wants the holdin,' Maurya
Bawn!

Rise up, rise up, alanna, Maurya Bawn, Maurya
Bawn,
(Now do not weep, *mo veelish*, in the dawn!)
We must hurry — no denyin' — from the little
cabin flyin'
For they're comin' to evict us, Maurya Bawn!

Your mother's dead an' buried, Maurya Bawn,
Maurya Bawn!
(Ah! Do not weep, *mo colleen*, in the dawn!)
God's Holy Hand is in it — sure the Home she
has this minnit
Ne'er a landlord can be stealin', Maurya Bawn!

'Tis well she's now in Heaven, Maurya Bawn,
Maurya Bawn!
(*Acushla!* Such wild sobbin', in the dawn!)
'Tis she would grieve to view us — Och! wid
tears o' blood she'd rue us,
Driven forth to beg the world, Maurya Bawn!

MAURYA BAWN

The hearth is cowld an' dreary, Maurya Bawn,
Maurya Bawn!
(*Asthoreen*, like our hearts are, in the dawn!)
'Tis you an' me to-morrow on the stony roads o'
sorrow —
Come and kiss me in my throuble, Maurya
Bawn!

Rise up, rise up, alanna, Maurya Bawn, Maurya
Bawn!
(Rise up, an' laive the ould home, in the dawn!)
The way is dark an' wairy, an' the hearts o' men
contrairy,
But we'll trust to God an' Mary, Maurya
Bawn!

Rise up, rise up, alanna, Maurya Bawn, Maurya
Bawn!
(*Mavourneen*, dry those tear drops — 'tis the
dawn!)
Brush back the shiny hair from your little fore-
head — there!
An' we'll face the world together, Maurya
Bawn!

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

I HEAR the waves,
The lonely, homeless waves
Clash on the beach;
And in the darkening night
The driven winds
Are moaning to the bleak and wintry stars!

Upon the cliff
A whitewashed cabin stands;
The fire burns low, a candle flickers dim,
And kneeling there
A mother tells her beads, and prays to Heaven.

Strong is her prayer;
The Powers on high are moved.
The very Throne of God
Is swayed as by a storm;
Sweet Mary's Son
Looks down upon that wild and barren coast!

Up from the sea,
Out of the black and grim and angry waves
Four drowned fishers come —
The widow's sons
Teig, Donal, Flann, and youthful Shemus,
All long dead —
They strain towards the light,
They drift like wavering mist-wraiths to the light!

Anon they stand
  Uncertainly, beside the cottage door,
The salt sea drips
  Down from their hands and hair and hollow eyes;
They touch the pane
  With slimy fingers, gibbering the while —
Ah, poor blind ghosts that know not why they come!

. . . . . .

The Heavens are oped, the mother gazes up
  The son of God is smiling down on her;
The candle flares and sways!
  Angelic pinions stir the tranced air!
Are these the four gray ghosts?
  How changed now!
No longer are their faces dull and dim;
  Transfigured now they shine with youth divine;
Where now the slime
  And dripping sea-weed?
Donal, Teig, and Flann,
  And tall young Shemus, stand in dazzling white!

In Heaven a hush!
  Who is it enters now?
Are these four fisher lads, or victor kings?
  Hark how the Archangelic hosts acclaim!
Hark how the Heavenly trumpets fanfare blow!

THE CONNAUGHT SHORE

THE bitter seas are racing,
The salt spray tosses high,
The gray and spumy cloud wrack
Is surging through the sky;
Wild billows sweeping landward
A thousand miles and more
Like famished wolves are leaping
Against the Connaught Shore!

The curraghs and the fishers
Sailed out but yester e'en,
When calm was on the water
And sunset's golden sheen;
The broken boats and bodies
To-day a mad tide bore
And flung with ruthless ravings
Upon the Connaught Shore!

Hark to that weird lamenting!
The ancient caoines arise!
The straw-roofed, white-walled cabins
Are filled with anguished cries;
That sound of sorrow pierces
Above the ocean's roar —
Dear Christ, look down with pity
Upon the Connaught Shore!

THE TINKERS

THE tinkers passed by Dhrimoclare,
White metal crackling on their backs;
The girls wore roses in their hair,
The men bore treasure in their packs!

Long had they journeyed o'er the plain,
From yon far mountain dim and tall;
Through sunshine and the golden rain,
Hearing the thrush and linnet call.

And long before the sun has set
They shall have reached my land o' dreams,
Where yellow furze out-blossoms yet,
And violets twinkle by the streams.

They shall have reached my chosen land,
Where never shall my footsteps stray;
Where flowered fields and castles grand,
And opal skies the eyes repay!

For I shall never see beyond
Those hills that shimmer in the sun,
Tho' my sad heart with yearning fond
Would follow where the tinkers run.

Tied to my houses, cows and lands,
I feel the prison chain and goad,
Such riches all I'd give to stand
Soul-free upon the tinkers' road!

IRELAND, MARCH 17TH, 1913

SHE stands beside her ancient seas
Attentive to their threnodies;

Gray-blue her eyes that frequent tears
Have brimmed throughout long weary years;

But now a new light in them glows,
Her pale cheek mantles with the rose.

Deep in her heart a song is sung,
The anthem of the ever-young.

The sun out-flashes, and the cold
And leaden waves are fringed with gold;

The lakes, the hills, the valleys green
Bathed in gladsome light are seen.

She kneels beside her deep-hued seas
And strikes her harp to ecstasies:

For all her woes are mem'ries old
All, all her piteous tales are told,

And, praising Heaven, she rises free
To hail the Gael's great destiny.

TO WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

WHAT is my prayer for thee this Easter Day,
Great bard of Erin's past, who dwell'st alone
With the dim shadows of a vanished time
With Ossian and pale Niam and wise Fin
Among the brooding and lamenting hills?
I pray for thee the love of Jesus Christ,
The comforts of His faith. May Mary spread
The mantle of her night-black holy hair
Over thy wearied eyes, and win thee back
From endless wandering (like the wandering moon)
With Goll and Caoilte, and the Finian bands
Across wide barren plains and foam-white seas.

And may the Judge say to thee at the last —
"Thou canst not enter here unheralded:
Go back and bring the friends thou lovest most."

And lo, again comes Yeats to heaven's gate
And all the Finians with him cheering wild
And stirring all its courts with brazen sounds
Of the Dord Fiann. And their spears and shields
Are cast, loud clashing, on the golden floor
Till heaven is cluttered with their warlike gear!

. . . . . .

Then Michael waves his flaming sword on high
And all his warrior angels welcome shout.

EMMET'S EPITAPH

(One of the first official acts of the new Irish Parliament will be a vote in favor of a National Memorial to the noble young Protestant hero, Robert Emmet.)

BUILD ye a shrine to Emmet, the noblest of Ireland's dead
Write ye in gold upon it the deathless words he said: —

"Let my epitaph not be written; let my dust unnoticed lie,
Till the shout for Ireland's freedom goes up to God's fair sky!

"When other men have arisen, and other times have birth,
When my country stands, a Nation, 'mid the nations of the earth;

"When my memory and my motives show cleared of shame and gloom,
Let Ireland write my story — let Ireland build my tomb!"

Thro' years of trial and waiting have Ireland's sons obeyed
This testament of their hero in death's drear shadows made;

EMMET'S EPITAPH

An hundred years of sadness did the martyr's bones remain
Unmarked, uncared, uncovered to the tempest and the rain!

Only in patriot bosoms his name thrice dear was writ,
Or in lonely hearts of exiles love's shrines to him were lit!

But now when her Cause has triumphed shall Erin proudly raise
A pillar of glorious marble to blazon forth his praise!

And on its stainless whiteness these words shall Erin grave: —
"*Here lieth my best beloved — my martyred hero brave!*

"*Here lieth young Robert Emmet, the eagle of liberty,*
Who died, when the night was darkest, that Ireland might be free!"

IN MEMORIAM

(Very Rev. Canon Sheehan, of Doneraile, died Oct. 6th, 1913.)

THE sun shines on his garden in the South,
Where Doneraile beside the Awbeg's stream
Lies drenched in light. Fair are the hills around
And golden is the Autumn's mellow glow
O'er Desmond, home of history and romance,
And present charm. But in the souls of men
Are grief and woe — for he has passed away
Who loved this land, and this his people true;
Knew all the secrets of their souls, and made
Their joys and woes his own (like him erewhile
By gentle Goldsmith sung); with matchless pen
Limning their lives. Another "Daddy Dan"
He moved amongst them, reverenced and beloved;
The children followed after for his smile:
Strong youth and manhood claimed his benison;
And ancient crones, to meet him on his way
And gain a greeting, hobbled fast along,
Forgetful of the weary weight of years!

Who now will make the world attend and see
The tragedy and comedy expressed
In these deep vales? Who now will make us smile
And weep at every page, obedient
Unto that magic wand he called his pen?
Who now will show us that blest miracle
The love of Ireland's people for their priest

And the priest's love for them — the rock-ribb'd
wall
That broke dark Persecution's bitter tides
Raging in vain and tossing spray obscene
Against high heaven?
Sheehan is dead — is dead!
And Doneraile is desolate! From far
Across the world shall sound the message sad
Of sorrowing friends whose myriad hearts he won
By his great books, that touched profoundest
chords
Of the stirred soul. All these, his "shadow-
friends"
Shall weep with Doneraile! And even those
Who when he lived, through envy and small mind,
Did him no honor, now shall crowd around
With tardy and unworthy hands to bring
Unwelcome wreaths.
His spirit shall not crave
The eulogies of men. His Judge divine
Weighing the toil of all his burdened years
Of patient service; — marking every care,
And grief, and pain, and portioning reward
For every noble thought flung far and wide
Like heavenly seed, shall smile on him with love,
Flooding his soul with rapture evermore!

THE EXILE'S RETURN

THE moaning of the wind on Carrig-Rue,
The rustling of the sedges by Loch Finn
Sound dirge-like in mine ears. A fairy tune
Sadder than death I hear.
The olden place
Is there, and stand the mystic hills around;
But all seem gray and ghostly, for no more
The comrades of my youthful days I see —
They all have fled, and I am left alone
With the familiar hills and long-known fields,
An ache within my heart. It seems a dream,
A weary dream from which I must awake
To hear their voices call, and see their eyes
So kind and friendly, gaze into mine own.
I cry aloud their names — friends of my youth
Come back to me from out the mist of years.
Come back to me from out the mournful Past;
Come back, come back — I shiver here alone,
Here 'mid the sights and scenes you loved so well.
My cry dies out upon the empty air,
And fairy music sobbing sad and sore
Burdens the hills. The wind on Carrig-Rue
Moans, and the sedges toss beside Loch Finn.

MOTHER LOVE

I WAS a hurt and frightened little boy
Running to mother's arms. All was well.
There was the farm-house door, and, just inside,
She would be waiting with her hands outstretched
And love-light in her eyes to comfort me;
And I would lie contented on her breast
Until my sobbing ceased. Then she would kiss
My tearful eyes, and call me loving names —
"*Alanna bawn! alanna dhas machree!*
Yes, I was hurt, but all would soon be well.

What is it? God! A dream? a dream you say?
There is no house — no mother — I am old?
And she is dead and gone this many a year
Under the graveyard mould. She cannot hear —
Think you she cannot hear?

Ah, yes, she hears!
She comes. I feel her arms about me now —
Her kisses on my face. Her tender voice
Is crooning once again: — "*Alanna bawn!*
Avic machree! Mo cuishla bawn asthore!"

EVELEEN BURKE

(Translated from the Irish)

IN Desmond are many fair maidens with faces
as pure as the dawn,
Whose eyes of deep blue sparkle bright as the
dew on a green-bosomed lawn;
And light is the song of their gladness, tho' near
it the tear-drops may lurk,
But none can make up for my sadness, since they
buried you, Eveleen Burke!

What right have I, Turlough O'Hagan, to speak
of your beauty at all?
Or to tell how you made old Killaiden a place
for the angels to call?
Sure for me or my likes there was never a chance
to be talking to you,
Whom God had marked out for His Kingdom, as
plain as His heavens are blue!

'Twas my woe that the landlord was forcing the
blood from my body for rent;
'Twas my grief that the writs of eviction that
left me no home had been sent!
No word could I speak to you, Cushla, though wild
the distress of my mind,
When I saw you depart, weeping bitter to leave
old Killaiden behind!

Mo creevin! they say that you never got loving
that land far away
That your heart ever yearned for Desmond,
and there to the last it would stay,
That your eyes would grow dim with the longing,
and blushes would come as of yore,
And the voice and the lips of you quiver at
mention of old Carron-More!

One day came the thing that I dreaded — a
message to say you were dead!
The mountains were rocking around me — the
skies black as Judgment o'erhead!
And I that was best in the hurling, and first at
the dance and the fair,
Got withered and old like a dry branch that
creaks in the cold winter air!

In Desmond are many young maidens as sweet
as the white ceann-a-bhan,
But I watch for the hour when the Pikemen
shall muster on gray Sliabh-na-mhan!
Then little I'll brood o'er my sorrow, enthralled
by the Hope and the Work,
When the long blades go surging to Freedom
— and Death leads to Eveleen Burke!

TIPPERARY

(If William Butler Yeats were requested to write a poem about Tipperary this is how he would go about it:)

AND we rode from the plains of the sea's edge; the sea's edge barren and gray,
On the foam-breasted horses of Mananan, under the slumbering trees;
We were searching for old Tipperary, so far in the distance away;
We were seeking the graves of the Red Branch, and rest from the moan of the seas!

The pearl-pale Niamh rode by us, more white than the waters are white;
Her eyes were all clouded with sorrow, as the new-lit fire shadows the skies,
And she said: "Shall we meet them, our comrades, the Finian heroes, to-night,
Where the highlands of gray Tipperary, wind-blanched and lonely, arise?"

And she cried: "Lo, I see in the distance the starry-edged rims of the hills,
Slieve-na-mon, Galtymore, are unfolding to welcome us home from afar!
O this is indeed Tipperary, aye wafting her soul-swooning thrills.
Hark! the bugle of Fin on her mountains makes tremble the ultimate star!"

Then Ossian came there to meet us — gold-
sandaled and silent he came,
And he swayed in our faces the Bell Branch,
slow-dropping a sound in faint streams
Softer than snowflakes in April, and piercing the
marrow like flame!
And we slept in thy breast, Tipperary, while
centuries vanished in dreams!

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

HE mused upon a fitful Danaan rhyme
All evening, leaning by an Ogham stone,
Tracing its mystic rune that told of days
Ere Firbolg or Fomorian walked the land;
For in his soul weird whisperings he heard:
The wild wind keening through an ancient tower,
The rustling reeds on lone Coolaney's strand.
The curlew's mournful call on Devenish shore,
The sobbing of the music of the Sidhe
In their enchanted raths!

The moon arose
Like a dim wraith, above a bastion black
Of sombre cloud. And then unto him came
His friends beloved, Fin, with all his troop;
And ruddy Oscar, eager for the chase;
And Ossian, fingering a fairy harp;
And fierce Cuchulain, in his battle car,
Gloomy as midnight; pearl-pale Niam, too,
And Deirdre of the Sorrows!

All did pour
From their deep eyes into the poet's soul.
The ever-brooding sadness of the Past,
The wistfulness of long-remembered dreams —
Then Ossian gave his harp and bade him sing.

RATHLIN ISLAND

'TWAS evening when our ship passed Rathlin's shore.
And, like some isle enchanted of the Sidhe,
Her mighty cliffs o'erhung the darkening wave,
Heavy with mystery. There was no sound
In all that ghostly place; but solemn fires —
Like those erewhile unto the sun-god lit
In pagan Erin — burned and marked the spot
Where kelp was stored.
The sun went slowly down,
Like Fin's broad burnisht shield, into the west,
And Druid shadows draped the mournful night!

To-night I think of Rathlin, in the north,
Framed in the thunder of her gloomy seas,
While war's dread pall descends.
No fire-light gleams,
And but the silent stars eternal glow,
Where Britain shuts her gates against the world!

MOONDHARRIG BY THE SUIR

LONELY 'tis to me by the Avondhu and Lee;
Dull the hours I travel by the Shannon's waters pure,
The days are slow to come,
And I longing to be home,
In the County of Kilkenny — in Moondharrig by the Suir.

Ormonde glens are fair, and the green fields of Kildare;
Beauteous is Wicklow, while her mighty hills endure;
To me more pleasing far
The fairy meadows are
And gentle streams that sparkle, in Moondharrig by the Suir!

Pleasant there is spring, when the feathered warblers sing,
And over many a mossy bank pale primroses allure,
When the cuckoo's voice is heard,
And the soul of man is stirred
To worship his Creator, in Moondharrig by the Suir!

Glad is summer time, when the clover and the thyme
Breathe a breath of Eden that a broken heart would cure;

When a haunting, dreamy haze
Crowns the glory of the days;
And through "Tir-na-n-og" we wander, in Moondharrig by the Suir!

Sweet is autumn there, in the mellow golden air,
When the grain is yellow, and the fruits of earth mature;
When from the haunted mounds
The "Keol-Shee" resounds,
Beneath the moon of harvest, in Moondharrig by the Suir!

Mild the winter blows, when the silent-falling snows
Clothe the glittering landscape in a vesture bright and pure;
From every mountain-pass
Come the joyous folk to Mass,
When Christmas bells are ringing, in Moondharrig by the Suir!

Dear to me the friends, where my own loved river wends;
Precious all the manly hearts that hold her fame secure
O'er many a stubborn field
That Gaelic slogan pealed:
"Make way for old Kilkenny! 'tis Moondharrig by the Suir!"

Wirrasthrue this tide! that in Breffny I must bide,
Piping to the dancers from Sleedhu to Gortnalure!
While home this Christmas Day
The loving neighbors say:
"God guard old Shaun the Piper!" in Moondharrig by the Suir!

ORANGE AND GREEN

I WALKED out in the fields to-day
(It is the most delightful season of the year).
White clouds were sailing over a blue sky.
Apple and cherry trees blossomed.
Bobolinks clinked like silver bells;
The new-born leaves,
Delicately verdant,
Interspersed the dark firs
Like a translucent emerald mist.
Or some filmy priceless tapestry.
I thought it needed but a ruined Greek temple
Of richly stained marble
Jeweling the far landscape
To make it seem like an enchanted vale
Of Tempe or Arcady or Thessaly!

Over the meadows around
The dandelions grew lush among the grass —
Orange and Green! Orange and Green!
Never were two more beautiful colors —
Never were two colors that blent so gaily!
I thought the sunset skies
Could not afford such contrast.

I thought with sadness:
In a short time the gold shall go
And the green remain alone;
Why can they not agree

And flourish thus forever together?
But Nature said:
"I am an old and wise mother
And know what is good for my children.
It is well they should blossom side by side
In love and in friendship,
Then blend all together in one
Into the green of the fields,
Under the blue of the heavens."

How glorious they are!
How tender they are!
Orange and Green! Orange and Green!

THE DAY OF THE "LITTLE PEOPLES"

THE banded races muster
To join the fray afar,
The souls of men are shaken,
The skies are red with war;
Thrones totter, tyrants tremble,
The People's might is shown —
When myriad wrongs are righted
Shall Ireland weep alone?

These are the slogans shouted,
These are the cries to-day: —
"Freedom for 'Little Peoples,'
Tyranny swept away."
"Freedom for Serb and Belgian,
Freedom for Slav and Pole";
When all have gained their guerdon
Shall Ireland miss the goal?

Shall Ireland, who has striven
Thro' years of woe and pain,
Lifting to darkened heaven
Her tortured eyes in vain —
She who in largesse prided,
Whose kings were great of yore,
A beggar stand derided
At England's bolted door?

Then wake ye, Sons of Ireland!
Demand your rights as men,
She, too, is a "Little Nation,"
Thunder the fact again!
Canada and Australia
Join in the mighty plea:
"Ireland, within the Empire
Self-ruled, self-guarded, free!"

THE ANCIENT CELTIC GLAMOUR

THE VIKINGS

THEY sailed from out the hidden fiord
When night-shades hovered dim,
The sea-wind shook them in its might,
And stretched their crackling pennants tight,
And on their prows the Northern Light
Flamed fitfully and grim!

They swept from out the sheltered fiord
And strange, wild vows, they made,
To Freyja of the golden hair,
And Odin in his heavens, where
With Aesir he doth feast prepare
For heroes unafraid.

They called upon the Valkyries
The Choosers of the Slain,
And prayed for hearts 'gainst panic steeled,
And souls that would not quail or yield,
When Death strode o'er the furrowed field,
And blood bedewed the plain.

Their long-ships spurned the ocean wave
From North Cape's buttress tall,
To Faroe's stark and savage shore
And Iceland's firths oft-viewed before,
And Erin's coasts where mad seas roar,
Lashing the black cliff-wall.

All night like hungry hunting wolves
The winds howled in the stays,
And giant forms of fear and dread,
And faces of their foes long dead
Gleamed in the deep sea-troughs ahead
Enwreathed in ghostly sprays.

High o'er the evil-brooding shrouds,
The shivering watch saw clear
The Norns that shuttled webs of doom;
And their own fylgjar in the gloom
Gray with the mildew of the tomb,
Filled them with nameless fear!

All day the boisterous billows tossed,
The drunken spars rolled free,
And the weird dragons at the prow
Glared up into the welkin now,
Then with a wild fantastic bow
Plunged down into the sea!

The threatening clouds hung black and vast
Across the waste close-drawn;
By wind and rain and sleetstorm lashed,
Into the green the slant bows crashed,
As the huge oak-ribbed galleys dashed
West through the mist-veiled dawn.

The storm-birds whirled round about
With raucous cries and shrieks;
Their red-rimmed eyes of cruel gray

Were like the Vikings' eyes that day,
When straight into an English bay,
They swung their galleys' peaks!

And woe befell that English town
When Hell broke loose around
Its quiet streets — and smoke and flame
Enwrapt its roofs — for Odin's name
Gave sanction unto scenes of shame
And murderous deed and sound!

The babes were tossed on Norman spears,
The children hacked and slain;
Nor youth, nor age exempted was,
And the gray sire that wailed his loss
They nailed upon a bloody cross,
And left to writhe in pain.

Then northward straight the Vikings sailed
Rounding the Orkney Isles;
And on a starry night and fine,
They burned Iona's sacred shrine,
When the black seas, like Spanish wine,
Shone redly tinged for miles!

By Jura's shore and Colonsay
They joined Earl Sigurd's fleet,
And many a Viking chief was there,
With stalwart form and ruddy hair,
And arms and armor burnisht fair,
Eager the foe to meet.

For well 'twas known thro' all that host
  As skalds prophetic told,
That Brian, Erin's King, should die,
And all his Irish clansmen fly,
If on Good Friday drawing nigh,
  They gave him battle bold.

Part false, part true this augurs' tale
  That led them to their doom;
As ringed with shields for ready war,
They passed the Northern Channel's bar,
Their long-ships sweeping proud and far,
  Making a wide sea-room.

Swift course they laid for Dublin Bay
  And entered like a wedge,
Solid and vast; a sight I ween
That ne'er before the Isle of Green
In all its troublous days had seen,
  Of direful strife the pledge!

They landed where by Tolka's banks
  Clontarf's broad ridges swell,
A fierce and glittering train to see
With Raven banners billowing free,
While Ocean, booming mournfully,
  Bade them a last farewell!

King Sitrick's forces on the right
  In chain-mail gleaming far,
And Sigurd, Earl of Orkney Isles,

And Anrud, lord of rough defiles,
And Brodar of the treacherous wiles,
Dared Erin's hosts to war.

Nor long did Brian's hosts delay,
That challenge to accept,
For, like the thunder-clouds that go,
With stately march o'er Aherlow,
From Galty's heights — portentous, slow,
They to the onset swept!

Murrough and Donal led them on
(Chiefs of the house of Brian),
Dalcassians and Eugenians brave,
And Desmond's troops from Cleena's wave
And Leinster's kerne, whose arrows drave
Dense on the Danish line.

Full thrice against the Viking left
Tall Murrough hewed his way,
Trampling upon the heathen crew,
To where the Raven standard flew,
And each time he the bearer slew
Gleeful as if at play!

And a note of death sang fierce and high
Where Ireland's war-pipes blew,
For as that Gaelic plaint did swell,
The splintering axes rose and fell,
Like Thor's great hammer, wielded well,
Cleaving a dread road through!

With ceaseless din the live-long day
The battle raged amain,
Till, as the sun dipped out of sight,
The Cross of Christ showed forth its might,
And the scared Vikings broke in flight
On Clontarf's fated plain.

* * * * * * *

Valhalla's halls can scarce contain
The thronging warrior souls!
Slow Tolka's stream is choked with dead,
Ten thousand Scanian corpses spread
Where on its marges, foaming red,
The frightened ocean rolls!

* * * * * * *

Gone are the Vikings from the wave,
The boreal lights' weird glow
On night-raid ne'er again shall dance,
O'er brazen helm and glinting lance,
While the grim dragons seaward prance
And blood-red moons sink low!

Gone are the Vikings from the seas,
Their Raven flag unfurled
Shall flaunt no more 'neath Northern skies,
Where the dark island summits rise,
Or southward swoop for prey or prize,
And frighten half a world.

THE VIKINGS

Gone are the Vikings from the wave,
But for their wild souls' rest
The surges sullen and sad that go,
Under thy wolf-tooth'd crags, Faroe,
Still chant a requiem hoarse and low
When night-clouds pall the west!

CNOC-AN-AR

(The Hill of Slaughter)

(A Pagan-Irish Dirge)

MY hero lies wounded and dying, 'mid thousands on red Cnoc-an-ar,
Where the hosts of the High King are charging the Finians in tumult of war,
With Caoilte, and Diarmuid, and Oscar, he stood on the ridge of the slain,
And the hosts of the High King broke past like the tide 'gainst a rock in the main.

O, bright was his spear in the morning, and burnisht his great shield of brass,
And pleasant his eyes that were blue as the harebell in dewy-wet grass;
But his spear and his shield are now broken and crusted with carnage and gore,
His eyes bloody-smeared shall flame out with the joy of the battle no more.

The halls of the Finians shall ring with the glory and fame of this day,
And the bards clash loud harps to the ranns, that the soul of proud Erin shall sway,
And Caoilte, and Diarmuid, and Oscar shall stand up like gods, proud and tall,
But the hero I weep will not hearken, tho' greater his glory than all.

CNOC–AN–AR

The Banshee is wailing o'er Desmond, I hear her
wild caoine thro' the night,
And o'er the lone home of my fathers there hovers
a pallid death-light;
I will raise him a cairn full kingly on the mournful
mountains afar,
And letter his praises in Ogham, my hero of dark
Cnoc-An-Ar!

THE THREE WAVES OF ERIN[1]

'TWAS Christmas of a year of omen great
For that Green Isle so long to grief a prey,
And deep I pondered on her misty past,
Half waking and half sleeping, till at length
I dreamt a dream in which I seemed to stand
On regal Galty-Mhor, and a clear sun
Shone dazzlingly o'er Eire's ancient land,
Her beauties rare enhancing. Munster's vales
Spread out beneath, and Leinster's pleasant shores
And rugged Connaught frowning to the west,
And Ulster northward in the cold, bright seas.
And as I watched, a cloud of mystery,
A druid haze enveloped hill and plain,
Shrouding the view. And from the air around
Three mighty Voices of the olden seas
— The Three Great Waves of Erin — sang aloud,
(With Cliodhna thundering deepest).
This their song:

We are the Waves of Erin,
The Three strong Waves that roar,
Since time began, and the race of man,
First viewed her bastioned shore.

[1] The three mystical Waves of Erin, mentioned often in the old Irish manuscripts, are Tonn Cliodhna, or the Wave of Cleena, on the south coast, near Clonakilty Bay; Tonn Tuaghe, on the north coast, near the mouth of the Bann; and Tonn Ruadri, or the Wave of Rury, on the east coast, around the Bay of Dundrum.

THE THREE WAVES OF ERIN

We are the Waves of Erin,
  And hold inviolate
The secret Word that then we heard
  From our Creator great.

We are the Waves of Erin,
  In patience waiting long,
Thro' myriad years dark-fraught with fears,
  To chant our triumph song:

TONN CLIODHNA (THE WAVE OF CLEENA) SINGS ALONE:

I saw the ships of Miledh
  Round up from golden Spain,
Thro' the deep mist the Danaan made
The secret for their Isle to shade —
In vain! — for soon from wold and glade
  Wild War yelled out amain!

I saw the clans of Connacht
  And fleets of Granuaile
Sail down from out the stormy West;
Seeking the foe with savage zest,
They churned the fretful seas to yeast,
  And scorned the rising gale!

I heard the wails of sorrow
  When the great Earls passed.
I saw rich Spain's armada tossed
As jetsam on an iron coast,
Huge hulls that oft the Atlantic crossed
  High 'gainst the heavens cast!

THE THREE WAVES OF ERIN

(TONN RUADRI) THE WAVE OF RURY SINGS ALONE:

When Patrick came to Erin
  Bearing a message blest,
I sang him in the night to sleep,
And calmed the ocean's fevered leap,
Sounding to him a welcome deep,
  Who came to save the West.

I saw the mail-clad Norman
  By false MacMurrough led,
When Strongbow and De Pendergast
Of stature tall and body vast
Began the strife so long to last,
  While Erin groaned and bled.

TONN TUAGHE (THE WAVE OF TUGA) SINGS ALONE:

The Viking ships came hurrying
  (O, many a year ago!)
From Faroe and the Orkneys bound,
And distant Hecla's fire-clad mound,
And Norway's fiords and Denmark's Sound,
  A fierce and warlike show!

O gay, their crackling pennants!
  And white their sails did shine!
And all the long fair summer's day
Their fore-feet spurned the creaming spray

As southward swooped they on their prey;
Earl Sigurd's ships of line.

Their gods were Thor and Odin,
And plunder was their trade;
And on their weird carved beaks at night
The Boreal flame threw ghastly light,
But to their last and greatest fight
The Danes pressed unafraid!

Three days I viewed them passing,
And then the ocean's plain,
Full many a year rolled dark and lone,
The Valkyries had claimed their own!
A thousand Viking Chiefs lay prone
On Clontarf's field of slain!

THE THREE WAVES SING TOGETHER:

We are the Waves of Erin,
Hearken our song at last!
For the long night of pain is done,
The heights are gained, the goal is won,
Lo, in the east the rising sun!
Our weary watch is passed.

No more shall wars waste Erin,
Or Strife or Hatred rave;
But Peace brood there with wings outspread
And her green vales shall freemen tread,
And Fame encrown her martyred Dead,
And Emmet's nameless grave!

Her ships shall plough the Ocean
  Once more a joy to see;
And in each rich and balmy dale,
Shall prosper the contented Gael,
And Christian joy and hope prevail,
  Thro' glorious years to be!

The three great Voices ceased. A dimness fell
Over the land, and shadowy figures loomed.
The olden gods swept by in dread array;
Angus, The Dagda, Mananan Mac Lir,
Nuadha, Bres, and Balor Evil-Eyed,
Their foreheads clad in clouds, and with them went
Their ancient peoples, murmurous like the sea,
Firbolg and Fomor, and the Danaan race
Deep-skilled in magic! Next there came a train
Of goodly heroes of the famed Red Branch;
Fergus and Ferdiah, and Naesi's Sons,
And Conall Cearnach of The Crimson Rout,
And Conor, son of Nessa. Last of these
Murhevna's pride, in form and face superb,
Cuchulain strode, and struck his clanging shield
Eager for battle. Close behind him marched
The Finian ranks, with brazen helm and spear,
And Finn in front with all his noble tribe —
Ossian and Oscar, Conn of the Hundred Fights,
And Dhiarmuid Son of Duibhne!
  These passed away
Into the mist, and with them disappeared
All Pagan pride and pomp!
  Then far away

THE THREE WAVES OF ERIN

On a long hill, all in a globe of light,
Like the low sun, I saw a little Babe
Laid in a Manger, and a lustre grew
Intense about Him, till the distant hills
Leaped into view! Whereat the Christ-Child smiled
And with a tiny Hand in blessing raised
Scattered the mists, and made the Isle His own.

THE HILL OF ALLEN

("The wine cup is circling in Almhuin's high hall." — THOMAS MOORE.)

I SAID I will arise and wander forth
High Almhuin's Hill to see, of Leinster wide
The glory and the crown — for I had read
In many a wild and strange old bardic tale
How on that hill great Finn his palace built,
And all the heroes of his order famed
Had lived and feasted there — Ossian the bard
And Caoilte and Conawn, and Goll the Red,
And Diarmhuid, son of Doon, and Oscar brave —
And so I traveled far a lonely road
Until I saw a mountain rise in air,
Through trailing Druid mists. I clambered up
Through reeds and withered grasses that sang out
A haunting chorus in the querulous wind.

A low, red sun hung sadly in the west,
And shadows filled the valleys when I paused
On Allen's summit. Lone and bare it was,
And only gorse and heather flowered there
Where flowered once proud Erin's chivalry!
No mound arose to mark the place where stood
The banquet hall where once the foaming mead
Went round, and wondrous tales of war and chase
Were chanted by the Bards to silvern harps,
While Finn presided, giving gracious praise,

And Ossian sat and mused of Tir-na-n-og
(A faery land he once had visited),
And Oscar dreamt of hunting the wild boar,
And Goll of bloody fields whereon he strode,
Breaking the ridge of battle!
Down below,
And all about, stretched out an endless plain
Of brown morass studded with silver pools.
With here and there a patch of vivid green.
All waste it was and empty — sad as death —
No human habitation showed in sight,
And ever and anon a curlew's cry
The voice of desolation pierced the air,
Re-echoing in my soul!
Ah, nevermore
Those ancient scenes that languish after them
Shall hear the heroes' laughter, or the sound
Of the Dord Fian (the hunting-horn of Finn).
Or see again the beauty and the grace
Of Diarmhuid and of Oscar! Long I stood
On Allen desolate till darkness fell
And in the moaning winds I seemed to hear
The baying of Finn's hounds, Skolawn and Bran.
And swift Lomair: and mighty shapes thronged round
Spear-armed for the chase! Then rose the moon
Large, broad, and round, like Finn's emblazoned shield,
Wheeling its mournful course across the sky,
And through the mists an hundred little lakes
Flamed up like crucibles of molten gold!

THE CELTIC GODS

(Time A.D. 1014. McLiag, King Brian's bard sings.)

THE pagan gods are gone — in Erin now
Reigns the sweet, gentle Son Who died for man.
The old war-burdened lays
Give place to hymns of praise;
The psaltery of Christ drowns out the Druid rann.

Midhir and Lugh are shadows of the hills;
Grey Mananan has stalled his demon steeds.
Young Angus and Etain
Long in the mould have lain,
And Aoivell in the grave no mortal whisper heeds!

The Celtic gods have passed; they could not brook
The puny wights that now men heroes call.
They missed lost Caoilte's grace,
Cuhoolin's mournful face,
And Fergus in his car, fierce trampling over all!

Deep in their caves of gold, the Fairy Race,
The wise De Danaan, wait the Judgment Day.
Then shall they call on Him,
Who made their glories dim,
That He restore their heaven, for pride once snatched away.

Balor and Bres are doomed; they walk no more
On Almhuin or on purple Slieve-na-mon;
The Viking hosts are flown
From Toohmoon and Idrone,
For Odin follows fast where all the gods have gone!

WHEN CONOR IN EMANIA REIGNED

WHEN Conor in Emania reigned
Fair was the land to view;
The pictured sheen of Ulla's green
Flashed from her lakes of blue.
When shall the Bard, contemned, ill-starred,
Such splendors know again?
The sad winds rave o'er Conor's grave
And mute his Harper's strain.

When Conor in Emania reigned,
Swift armies of the *Sidhe*,
Rode on the wind, the host behind,
His dread allies to be;
A thousand elfin trumpets sang
His worth and kingly fame;
A thousand vibrant *clairseachs* rang
The glories of his name.

When Conor in Emania ruled,
The radiant crown he wore,
Rich guerdon from the friendly sprites,
A fairy maiden bore;
And eke a shimmering Sword of Light
No foeman could defy, —
When Conor lived the world was bright
Alas! the King should die!

OSSIANIC

THE Raven of Corran croaks hoarse o'er the
desolate plain,
Croaks loud o'er the Finian hosts that at Gabra
were slain!

The waves of the haven of Rinn-da-bharc roar
on the strand,
But ne'er shall they wash out the crimson of blood
from our land!

The oak-woods of wild Glendavall, in pain quiver
and toss,
But the hunters will ne'er shout again — unre-
deemed is our loss!

No more shall the pleasant Dord-Fiann, Finn's
bugle be heard,
When with baying of hounds Slieve-na-mon's
mighty forests were stirred.

All sudden o'er Leiter's dark lake does the hunt-
ing moon rise,
But fearful its look of red fire like a lost demon's
eyes!

The rustling of reeds where the sere marshes lean
toward Rath-Gree
Is wild with the sorrow of Earth and the grief of
the sea!

Oh, why should I, Ossian, be living and these to be gone: —
Great Caoiltya, and Oscar and Goll, mighty Finn and Conawn!

Come, Death, come and lead me, I wait without shrinking or dread —
We will go with the fast-dying sun to the Isles of the Dead!

THORSTEIN THE BRAVE

(The incident on which the following poem is founded, is narrated in the Icelandic Saga of *Burnt Njal.*)

WHEN Brian of the Dalagais
On Clontarf's crimson plain,
Let loose his Celtic chivalry;
And his Dalcassians, dread to see,
With broadswords cleaving murderously,
Fell on the frightened Dane;

Mad panic struck the Viking ranks,
And all their mighty host
Staggered and swayed in terror dire,
Like forests filled with ravening fire,
And all broke seaward, son and sire,
To where their galleys tossed.

But when, like billows bursting bounds,
Swept on the Irish charge,
Thorstein, the fearless son of Hall,
Disdained to fly, and fronting all
King Brian's troops — a rushing wall —
Knelt on the ocean's marge!

He knelt and tied his buskin-string,
As one whose spirit free,
Being made of more than mortal mould,
No fear could conquer, or strike cold,
And on the foe his glances bold,
Glittered full scornfully.

To whom spoke Kerthial, Thomond's chief,
With dripping axe in hand:
"How now, oh Dane? and wilt not run
When all thy friends the conflict shun,
Like mists that fly the morning sun?
Why singly hold the strand?"

And answered Thorstein, mockingly,
With smile as when the day,
One moment in a wintry gleam,
Floods Iceland's frozen plains that seem
Like seas of glass in evil dream —
One flash — then all is gray:

"Why should I run, oh chieftain brave?
My home lies far away,
Deep in the fog-shrouds of the north
Where red volcanoes shake the earth —
My speed would be of little worth.
I can't get there to-day!

"The long day sleeps on the Polar seas,
And the long, long night will gloom,
And weary of endless day and night,
I welcome death in the open fight,
Bold foeman, strike — my heart leaps light
To meet a warrior's doom!"

Then Kerthial's iron face relaxed,
And his Irish eyes grew soft,
As when on the heights of Galtee More,

THORSTEIN THE BRAVE

The spring snows melt, and the torrents roar,
And mild-eyed daisies cling all o'er,
The sun-crowned slopes aloft.

He reached a hand to the kneeling Dane,
And raised him to his side,
Then spoke: "On many a field I've stood
And felt the terrors of battle brood —
But, by St. Bride and the Holy Rood,
I clasp your hand with pride!

"For I hold him more than warrior
Who stands up, scorning all,
When his comrades fly in panic dread
And earth is rocking beneath his tread —
Your life I spare, and bare my head,
To Thorstein, son of Hall!"

Then hand in hand to the Irish camp
The two great heroes went;
And Thorstein tarried in Erin's land
First chief in Kerthial's own command —
Christ's yoke he took, and the fierce gods banned
For whom his youth was spent!

Honors and high renown were his,
And when he died, a moan
Went up from circling shore to shore,
And on men's souls fell a burden sore,
For Death was lord of the world once more
When Thorstein's soul had flown!

PRINCE MURROUGH AT CLONTARF

A FRAGMENT

THEN the Irish Chieftain, Murrough,
Viewing with half-shut eyes,
That blinding shimmer of Danish mail,
Bade all his pipers skirl and wail,
And rouse the saffron-girded Gael
To deeds of great emprise.

And first into the combat, he
Swung his huge axe on high;
And as the din of war did swell,
His blows of death resistless fell,
And many a Viking's parting yell
Rose to the ruthless sky.

Heimdal of Atlan first he slew,
And Starkad of the Yews;
And Vidar of the golden locks,
And Eyjwolf of the castled rocks,
And Loki of the battle-shocks,
And Gymir of the Meuse.

And Thangbrand, out of Helsingford,
Who burned the Virgin's shrine;
And Hrapp, that pillaged Wexford town,
And Beld, a Baresark of renown,
And Thorkell, of the evil frown,
He split from crown to chine.

PRINCE MURROUGH AT CLONTARF

Out to the Raven Standard's foot
He cleft a gory lane;
And as the flag of Odin fell,
Rose up an agonizing yell
From the lost Danes — like souls in hell
That drink the dregs of pain.

Then Murrough raised the Strong Hand Cry,
The call of his ancient line;
And left and right, and all about,
Answered his clansmen's rending shout,
As roaring over the Norseman's rout,
Thundered the troops of Brian!

ANCIENT IRISH WAR SONG

(Air, *The Minstrel Boy*)

RISE, men of Erin, grasp the sword
And burst upon the foeman,
Our war-cries oft these hills have stirred
And now we'll crouch to no man!
The chariots and the chargers bring
That oft to victory bore us —
Our blows upon their mail shall ring
While floats the Sun-burst o'er us.

On many a crimsoned field of yore
Our Gaelic slogan thundered,
As on their wavering van we bore
And broke their ranks all sundered!
By Cleena's Wave and Desmond's plain
And Shannon's surging water
Their pirate blood left many a stain,
Rolled back in waves of slaughter!

With Dathi brave, our fathers swept
O'er foreign lands victorious,
The Gaul and haughty Roman wept
To view their standards glorious!
Rise sons of sires renowned as they
Add lustre to their story,
We'll conquer in the fight to-day
Or die for Erin's glory!

BATTLE OF GABHRA AND DEATH OF OSGAR

BUT now the hovering shadows settled down, —
The glory-torches of the Fianna
Flickered in smoke obscure, — the end was nigh,
Nor could a desperate valor 'vert the doom
The fates had ordered.

Gabhra's dreadful day
Raced through the imminent future like some orb
Of deadliest menace thro' the fields of space.

On the high hill of Teamhair, the Ard-Righ,
Wearied of tithe and tribute, took resolve
To break the Finian power and destroy,
By might of arms their Order that so long
Had mocked his sceptre. Swift command he gave,
And gathered round his hall an armament
Of all the men of Erin, and his plans
Unfolded to their kings. Then word he sent
To comely Osgar, asking would he come
Unto a feast of welcome to be held
At Royal Teamhair. And because he feared
No living man, the valiant Osgar came
With scarce three hundred of his body-guard
To bear him company. Now as they passed
By a lone ford, a woman of the "Sidhe"
Was washing clothes that bloodied all the stream!

And Osgar: "Red your washing, — dread your task
Washing red garments for the gory dead!"
And answer made the woman of "Sidhe:" —
"Haughty your head, but soon shall ravens croak
(When the fierce fight is done), above your corse."

On fared the Finians then and never stopped
Till Teamhair opened them her massive gates,
And welcome good was theirs, and lordly feast
Till three days passed, but then the King in pride
Demanded Osgar's spear, which he refused,
Whereat the King was wroth and threatened him,
And words grew hot and angry 'twixt the twain,
Till Osgar rose and in high dudgeon left
The kingly halls, and journeyed back to Finn.

Nor long was he arrived when message came
From the Ard-Righ that now no longer he
Would tribute pay to Finn, or recognize
The Finian power thenceforward in the land.
Then Finn sent challenge back, and mustering
His swift battalions, marched to meet the foe.

Now fails my pen to tell of Gabhra's Field,
That hell of slaughter where red ravens croaked
O'er mangled corses. Fearful was the clash
Of shield 'gainst shield, — the brandishing of swords —
The serpent hissing of ten thousand spears

Hurtled thro' air. For every man with Finn
Full twenty fought with Ireland's monarch there,
Mighty the feats performed, and ne'er before
Raged such a battle on the Irish soil
Nor ever shall again! 'Twere hard to tell
What slaughter Osgar made. By him there fell
Five twenties from the Country of the Snow;
Four hundred from the Country of the Lion!
Of the Green Swords fell seven times twenty there!
And five score of the sons of warlike Kings!
Right weak was he with wounding when he spied
The great Ard-Righ before him, yet he rushed
Like raging billow on his foe, who wheeled,
And hurled a greedy spear that through and through
Pierced Osgar's bosom, bringing him to knee.
Yet as he knelt he cast his fatal lance
That pierced the High King's brain and gave him death.
Then in a faintness Osgar low reclined;
The battle ceased, for few were left to fight,
And the spent Finians raised a mournful "keen."
And Caoilte came and asked, "Oh darling heart,
How fares it with you now?" And Osgar said:
"I only die as you would have me die!"
Then lifting him upon their ample shields,
Caoilte and Oisin took the wounded man,
And brought him to a round and verdant hill,
To strip his armor. Scarce a hand's breadth space
Of his white body was without its wound,
And the sad Finians wailed for Osgar brave,

Cursing the day; — till far across the plain
Finn's banner flashed and Finn came silent there,
Whom Osgar saw and made salute, and said:
"Oh! mighty Finn, I hold my wish in death."
And Finn cried out, "Oh, would that I were there
To fall in Osgar's place, — black grief is mine!"
Then Osgar, to assuage their bitter woe
Spoke words he meant not, and 'tis what he said:
"Indeed, oh Finn, if you were dead to-day
No one would hear me keening, — for no man
Ever found any heart in me at all,
But heart of twisted horn with iron bound.
And that which vexes me full sore is this: —
The howling of the dogs around me here,
The keening cries of tough old fighting-men
And wailing of the women, one by one!"
Then Finn made moan: "Oh, child of my own child,
Slender and white, my sorrow 'tis that thou
Art stricken low! My heart is starting now
Like hunted deer! Oh, weak am I and sad
For thee, and for our vanquished heroes all,
For glory of the Finians passed away
Like mists of morning. Farewell all renown,
And farewell feasting now, and war and spoils,
For every happiness was ever mine
Has left my hands — I grasp at empty air,
My life is void."

Then Osgar, as he heard
These hopeless words, stretched out his wounded hands,

Closed his gray eyes, and died. And Finn went
off
Some distance from the rest and wept aloud,
And the few Finians left gave three great cries
Of haunting sorrow on the lonely hill!

THE DEATH OF GOLL, THE SON OF MORNA

'TWAS in the waning of the Fenian power
And enmities arose 'twixt Goll and Finn,
Till one day Cairell, son of Finn, met death
From Goll beside the cold, ensanguined sea.
And Finn, when that he saw his comely son
Lie dead and gray and like a blighted branch,
Grew white with sudden anger, and resolved
He would have life for life.

But Goll went off
Where a great cliff stretched out into the sea
And in a cave abode; and Finn brought here
A mighty host to guard the place around
Lest he escape. Now Goll, because he knew
His doom was sealed, lay on the shingly beach
To wait for death; and he would not allow
Or food or drink to pass his parched lips,
And the sea-sand blew in his tortured eyes.
And from the cliff his wife called down to him:
"Oh, husband mine, a pity 'tis that thou
Shouldst wait for death upon the salty rocks
Beside the pitiless sea — so come to me
And I will nourish you to strength again,
For I am sick at heart to see you lie
Your gold hair crusted with the bitter spray."
But all her cries were vain, he would not stir,
And thus he spoke, in kindly tone withal:

"Oh sweet-voiced queen, 'tis better I should die;
I never took advice of woman yet,
To east or west, nor ever will I take;
And do not you be fretting after me,
Oh, queen of the white hands, — remember all
My gifts that make you rich, and when I die
Take Aodh for husband who came out of Spain,
The son of the best woman in the world;
He loves you, and it is not well for you
These troublous times to lack a husband's
strength."
He laid him down again upon the rocks
And after twelve days died.
And his good wife
Keened there for long and made lament full sore
For Goll, the son of Morna, whose great fame
Filled all the land — he was the best but one
Of all the heroes in the host of Finn!

OSSIAN TO ST. PATRICK

PATRICK:—

Oh Ossian, son of Finn, though old and bent,
Thou art not like my clerics, calm and mild.
I fear me that thou dwellest in the past,
And ponderest over fights, and gory fields
Neglecting all thy prayers.
Bethink thee well
That thou art old and likely soon to die.

OSSIAN:—

Oh Patrick, had you been with us to see
The warriors of the Fianna lead the chase
When the dun deer leaped swift thro' Glen-da-
vaul,
While baying hounds waked lonely Knoc-an-Ar —
Had'st heard the echoing horn upon Slieve Grot
Or seen them plunge, spear-armed, in the woods
Of Cliu-Mail, where the huge-branching trees
Made gloom as of a cloudy winter's eve,
And the wind's tumult mid the gnarled boughs
Thrilled like the Ocean's voice when booming
waves
Burst in with thunder-shock at Bundatrore!
Or had'st thou seen, oh Patrick, gentle saint,
The Finians in furious battle-shock
Shaking the desperate fields whose gory fame
Rings o'er the ridges of the centuries: —

Dubh-Cumair, Knucha, Moy-Muchrume the red,
And Gabhra where their flaring glory-torch
Plunged deep in blood, hissed out in rayless
gloom —
Had'st thou, oh Patrick, seen such stirring things,
Not all too calm would shine thy holy brow."

PATRICK: —

Peace! peace! old, doting man, and think of Christ,
Who answered not, nor spoke an angry word,
When Jews and Romans nailed Him to a cross.

OSSIAN: —

Oh! would that Finn were there all ready armed,
With Oscar and Conawn, and close beside
A thousand of the Fianna, — they would sweep
These cruel Jews, as roaring Assaroe
Sweeps the dead leaves!

PATRICK: —

Thy mind is all on strife, yet death is nigh,
Think on thy sins and weep for them, for He,
The loving Christ was sacrificed for sin.

OSSIAN: —

Hard is the lesson, Patrick, Saint of God,
That I must turn my mind away from Finn,
From all his wars and all his hunting feats
And weep my sins, in fasting and in prayer!

CREDA'S LAMENT FOR CAEL

THEN Creda, wife of Cael, came mourning there,
And searching for the dead. And as she searched
She saw a meadow crane defend its young
Against a fox; and so she said with grief:
"No wonder is it I am sad for Cael,
Since the wild bird will sacrifice its life
To save its loved ones."

Then came Fergus there
Called "of the True Lips," and she queried him,
"What news of Cael?" and Fergus answered true:
"The news I have of Cael is sad indeed;
He died the last of all our men to-day.
When all the fight was over he swam out
Into the salty waves, although his wounds
Were thick and deep, and sorely he had bled,
And as the last man of the enemy,
Finnachta Fiacloch, was leaping back
Into his ship, he dragged him down to death
In the cold sea." And by this time the waves
Cast comely Cael upon the crimsoned shore,
And all the searchers of the dead came there,
And the sad Fianna gently raised him up,
And Creda came and sang this mournful caoine:

CREDA'S LAMENT FOR CAEL

"The harbor roars, the harbor roars in grief
For drowning of the Hero of the Lake,
The waves are keening wildly on the shore!

"Full pitiful the singing of the thrush
In Leiter Laeg — and on the Pleasant Ridge,
The blackbird mourns her nest all desolate!

"On Drium-da-lis the deer are in distress,
The mighty stag is calling on the doe,
The doe that in Slieve-Silen stretches dead!

"Full sorrowful to me the hero's death,
The troubled sea is dashing on the beach
And making heavy moan for mighty Cael!

"Full many a king in battle fell by him,
His shield ne'er trembled under rain of blows,
But now his mighty arm is still and cold!"

And having made lament, the anguished wife
Fell dead of grief her husband's corse beside,
And in the selfsame furrow both were laid.
And Caoilte raised a stone above them there
Graving their names in Ogam, and their tale
Of warlike courage, and undying love!

CUCHULAIN COMING TO THE FORD

LIKE a fierce god the young Cuhoolin came,
His car of bronze swept on by furious steeds.
Ruddy his cheeks; his hair was raven black,
And, 'neath his brows, like sudden baleful fires,
Dread eyes outgleamed. Strong spears stood by
his side.

His brazen belt supported a huge sword;
Around his neck, that like a pillar rose,
A torque of gold, against a saffron shawl,
Blazed in the sunlight. Terrible to see
Was the great Hound of Ulster, Erin's pride,
Star of Emania; none might bar his path!
Death rode before him in a whirling mist,
And all men trembled when they saw him pass,
Grinding the road to smoke beneath his wheels
And furrowing the hills!
Southward he sped
His horses swooping like two raiding hawks
From a tall cliff upon a stormy day;
Or like the March wind over a smooth plain;
Or like young stags first started by the hounds
O'er their first field!
As if on flags of fire
They spurned the earth that shook beneath their
tread!
So came Cuhoolin to the Bloody Ford
And faced the hosts of Connacht Maeve outspread
Like a great sea with foamy banners flecked!

OSSIAN LAMENTS FOR TIR-NA-N'OG, THE LAND OF YOUTH

HOW pale and wan the sun looks out above
This world to which unwilling I returned!
How dim and haggard gleams the moon at night
Upon the mournful hills! Ah, different far
The beauty and the glow of Tir-na-n'og,
Where in the day an hundred golden suns
Lit up the mellow skies and filled the vales
With magic radiance; and in the night
A thousand moons, as large as Oscar's shield,
Flecked the deep vault like stars!

The meadows there
Were ever vernal, filled with honeyed flowers,
Fragrant with musk and thyme and asphodel,
And through the midst there wandered many a stream
Making soft melody o'er colored sands,
A music void of sadness! Mighty woods
In which the breeze a sweet susurrus droned,
And happy songsters fluted all the day,
Stretched to the distant mountains, that in hues
Like tinted ivory, flung back the light!

In front a sea, of many changeful shades,
Now gray with mist, now purple-hued and blue,
Turquoise and sapphire, amber and red gold,
Mirrored the skies; for never tempest came

To plough its surface; only gentle winds
Played o'er its bosom, sending wavelets in
To sport and chatter on the pebbled strand!

Why did I leave that bright and pleasant land
For these gray cheerless shores? The warriors there
Were young and tall and beautiful to see,
And never could grow old or querulous,
For to that isle no sadness ever came
Or sob of earthly weeping, but the sounds
That spoke of mirth and joy and innocence,
Of hearts all free from earthly sin and care!

What songs we sang unto the echoing groves!
The blackbird piping sweet at Leiter Laeg,
The golden-throated thrush in Glen-na-smole,
Made not such jocund music, as we sang
Our triumph over death and pain and woe,
For none of these could ever enter in
To Tir-na-n'og! The happiness and youth
Of never-failing life, the wondrous joy
Of growing things — of plants and trees and flow'rs,
And of the flocks that wandered 'mid the hills —
All, all of this we felt and understood!

Why did I leave that fair and blessed place,
To face old age and palsied limbs and death,
And dwell with grudging and ungentle folk?
If only Finn were living, all were well,

For he would clasp me to his mighty heart
And call his hounds, and lead a glorious chase
Once more through Glen-da-vall — with Oscar
there
And Goll, and brave Conawn — but they are dead,
And I am left, a withered branch that shakes,
Uncared, unsheltered, in the clamorous winds!

THE DEATH OF CUCHULAIN

I

AND now — for he was spent with many wars —
Emer, Cuchulain's wife, the hero led
To a deep Ulster glen, remote from men
And from war's rumors. Fair the landscape was,
With slumbrous, waving woods, and plashy brooks,
And blossomed meadows. There the blackbird's song
At morn and eve was heard, and the wild doe
Played with her fawn along the shadowy glade;
And on still nights chimed in the distant sea,
Not mournfully, but as the far-off strains
Of faery lullabies — like magic harps
That crooned sweet notes of drowsy rest and sleep,
Of old, when the De Danaan banished pain
After a bloody fight. His tent they set
Beside a pleasant stream whose ferny marge
Swelled soft and green, a rest for weary eyes;
And there with all her household Emer hoped
For quiet days, and nights from peril free
While the great Hound of Ulster gathered strength
To front his foes once more. But Connaught Maeve,
The wily queen that ruled the rugged West,
Enraged because Cuchulain had flung back
Her mighty host, and all her scheming foiled,

Sought out his hiding place and rumors sowed
Within his mind, by messengers disguised,
How that red war had desolated all
His land, Muirthemne; how his hall of fame
Dundalgan, where his fathers dwelt of old,
In ashes lay. The hero then began
To fret his soul, desiring to depart
To instant strife. But Emer and her maids
Made shift to hold him, bidding him beware
The false illusions of his enemies,
And for a time they triumphed. Yet his sleep
Was troubled with wild dreams in which he saw
Long lines of fighting men who rushed at him
Shouting fierce cries; and red-beaked birds of war
Croaked round his head, and spears went hurtling by
Like hail in winter! Then again he strove
To leave the quiet glen grown hateful now,
To his vexed mind: but Emer cried —"My lord,
Have patience till thy valiant friend arrives,
The blazing torch of valor of the Gael
Called Conall the Victorious. When he comes
Let ye go forth together — if alone
Thou settest out, thou goest unto death;
So have the Druids spoken, and the four
Wise men that dwell at Saimer by the sea."

II

That night Cuchulain cried aloud in sleep,
A mighty sea rose 'gainst him surge on surge,
And with his sword he dreamt he fought the waves,
The wild white steeds of Mananan. He woke

Weary and spent, and listening in the gloom,
He heard a strange weird music wailing far,
The faery harp of Mananan that called
To strife and death. Sad Emer heard it too,
And in her heart she owned her task in vain.
So in the morning, Laeg the charioteer
Yoked the two steeds far-famed thro' all the North
To the scythed car. Then Emer and her maids
Placed his sharp spears therein; his armor bright
They buckled on, and put his deadly sword
In his right hand. The champing steeds were loosed
And like two hawks that on a windy day
Swoop from the mountains, so across the plain
They swept in thunder, and Cuchulain's heart
Leaped high with joy — the wine of battle filled
His yearning soul! But as they passed the ford
A woman of the Sidhe stooped by the wave
Washing red clothes that bloodied all the stream!
Then Laeg cried out — "Oh, noble Hound, behold
The fairy-woman, for a sign of death
Is washing there — these are your clothes that drip
With mortal gore — sweet master, let us back
To Emer's side, nor tempt the chance of war
And certain death forboded." Thus, in tears,
The charioteer made plea. But Ulster's Hound
Cuchulain spoke: "Fair fame outliveth life.
Short life with honor crowned and valiant deeds
Be mine, and not long life and cankering sloth;
On to the battle then!" And southward swept
The fiery steeds. As when o'er Sliabh-na-mban

The angry sun before a hurricane
All baleful rises, glaring on the world,
Thus o'er his shield Cuchulain's countenance
Loomed dreadful, and the "Hero-Light" shone out
Above his head.
So to his last great fight
The matchless steeds Murhevna's Chieftain bore,
While all beholding him, with terror quaked,
Crying: "Beware, the Hound of Death is come."

III

All day the battle raged, and hundreds fell
Beneath Cuchulain's blows. Wide lanes he cut
Thro' the opposing ranks, till Maeve, the Queen,
Wept bitter tears, and clenched her hands in fear
To see her bravest champions thus laid low.

At last, in direst need she had recourse
Unto the sorcerers of the Danaan race,
Bidding them fashion spears of magic power,
Three spears of fatal cast; and these she gave
To three of her best heroes. One she gave
To Curoi, who was king of Munster wide,
And one to Erc his son. The third great spear
She gave to Luha of the Heavy Hand,
Bidding him cast with all his strength and skill.
Curoi cast first, and, going wide, the spear
Pierced through the Gray of Macha. The brave steed
Tottered, and groaning, fell. Erc cast the next
Wounding Cuchulain lightly, and, beyond,

Pinning the charioteer. Cuchulain now
Forgot his guard, and tried to pull the spear
From Laeg's deep wound.
Fierce Luha made his cast
And pierced the Hound of Ulster through and through
With deadly barb. Now great Cuchulain knew
His death had come, and, rising in his seat,
He tried to draw the spear-shaft from his breast,
But tugged in vain. A silence fell around,
And all men watched to see the hero die.
The blows of battle ceased.
There was, near by,
A pillar stone set up in olden day,
By the De Danaan or the wandering Pict,
And runed with Ogham script. To this he came,
Saying he would not lie before his foes
Or cringe in death. He bound his girdle fast
Around the stone, and underneath his arms,
Placing his shield in front, and lifting high
His bloody sword in air. And thus he stood
The "Hero Light" a shimmer round his head,
Pallid as when a winter sun goes down,
Till the weird lustre slowly died away
And the sword fell, as fell Cuchulain's head
Upon his wounded breast! Thus nobly died
Murhevna's Chieftain, glory of the Gael;
And when he died, the Three Great Waves made moan
Around the coast of Erin; while the Sidhe
Woke with wild caoining all the mournful hills!

THE COMING OF LUGH

I

YOUNG Lugh, Deliverer of the Danaan Race,
For three times seven years remained away
In Tir-na-n'og with Mananan MacLir,
And happy was his stay. He raced the waves
Along the level strand in boyish glee;
He plucked enchanted apples, nectar-sweet
From trees with scarlet blossoms. Wondrous birds
With vari-colored breasts and golden wings
Flew round about him. Gentle, milk-white deer
From out the woods, and black-maned lions came
To play with him, and strange beasts that none else
Had ever seen — all gamboled with the youth,
So that the days passed swiftly. He forgot
His home in Erin, and his people there,
The Danaan Race, now prone beneath the heel
Of the misshapen Fomor and their king
Balor of the Evil Eye. At length one day
When Lugh had grown to manhood, Mananan
Bespoke him thus: — "'Tis now thrice seven years
Since first I brought you here to Tir-na-n'og;
No gift in all that time have you received,
But now I bring you gifts. And then he gave
The Sword of Light to Lugh, who when he took
The Sword in hand, remembered how he had

Long, long ago cried to the Irish hills: —
"Farewell, but some bright day I shall return."
Then turning unto Mananan he spoke: —
"I must go back to Erin." Mananan
Grew sad at this and muttered painfully:
"O Lugh, and will you leave this fairy land
Where sorrow never comes, nor age, nor death,
And go to Erin where you will not find
Or joy or feasting — for the Fomor there
Have shorn the Danaan of their olden power,
Ogma their Champion they have made a slave,
And Angus is an outcast. Nuadha,
The king of all the Danaan, once so great,
Now boasts one lonely dun in which his folk
Hold secret meeting where they once were lords
Of land and sea. Will you forsake me here
And go to strangers?" Then made answer Lugh:
"The mountains and the rivers and the woods
Of Erin I remember, and if all
My blood and kin were dead, and the high seas
Had covered all but the bare mountain tops
I would go there." Then Mananan replied: —
"You have the hardiness that triumph wins,
And now I'll set you on my magic steed
Leading a troop as valiant as yourself;
My helmet I will place upon your head,
And you shall wear my breast-plate. Soon indeed
Like chaff before the winds ye shall expel
The Fomor from fair Erin."
Now when Lugh
Put on the helmet, a great brightness shot

Into the sky, as if another sun
Had risen. When the breast-plate covered him
There swelled thro' all the land of Tir-na-n'og
A mighty wave of music. When he leaped
Upon the steed of Mananan, there rushed
A great wind by him, and a gallant troop,
Rode by his side. Their horses were like snow,
And gladness that the years could not erase
Beamed from their faces. Then they rode away
Across the sea, and soon the Three Great Waves
Of Erin welcomed them with thundrous voice: —
The Wave of Rury, and The Wave of Tuagh,
And the long, foaming creast of Cliodhna's Wave.

II

No man of Erin saw the enchanted troop
Coming to land; for where they went ashore
A deep, dark wood of pine trees fringed the sea.
Silent they rode between the tall straight trees
Till in the forest's heart Lugh gave command: —
"Rest here till morning, I must go alone
Unto the Dun of Nuadha the King
For news of all my kinsfolk. He put off
His shining armor, and put on a cloak
Sombre and black. He then set out on foot
And came at evening to the royal dun.
Three times he struck the brazen door, whose guard
Spake from within: "No man can enter here
But one who is the master of some craft;
What can you do?" "I am a carpenter."

And answer made the guardian of the door: —
"We have a carpenter already here,
Luchtar the son of Luachaid." Then said Lugh:
"I have the craft of smith." "We have within
Colum, a smith, and master of his trade."
"I have the craft of Champion," pleaded Lugh.
"We have here Ogma, Champion of the World."
Then Lugh: — "I am a harper of renown."
"We have here Abhean, son of Bicelmos,
In far-off Toomoon of the Fairy Hills
Chosen by all the men of the three gods."
Lugh spoke again: — "I have the noble craft
Of poet and historian." "We have here
Erc son of Ethaman, a poet true."
Said Lugh: — "I am a wizard and physician."
"We have the great physician Dian Cecht,
And wizards and magicians by the score."
"I have the craft of cupbearer," said Lugh.
"Nine cupbearers we have within the dun."
"I am a brazier working brass and gold."
"We have the famous brazier, Credne Cerd."
Then Lugh cried out: — "Go, ask your Danaan king
If he has ONE man who knows all these trades.
If so I will not enter." Then went off
The Keeper of the Door to Nuadha; —
"There is a wondrous youth who stands outside;
As the Ildanach, Master of All Crafts,
He seeks admittance." "Open then to him,"
Said Nuadha, "I wish to see this youth."

III

Lugh passed into the dun, while Ogma gazed
With eager looks upon him, for he thought
To test the youth in feats. And so he stooped
And lifting a great stone he cast it far
Out thro' the open door, and past the fosse —
The effort of a giant. Then went Lugh
And cast the mighty stone back to its place,
Not through the door, but through the dun's strong wall!
And Ogma said: — "Your cast has beaten mine;
Sit in the champion's seat, before the king,
And let the chess be brought." They played, and Lugh
Won every game. Then Nuadha, the king: —
"Truly you are Ildanach, I would fain
Hear music of your making, but we have
No harp to offer you." "I see one here,"
Said Lugh, "a harp full worthy of my skill."
And answer made the king: — "That is the harp
Played by the Dagda, and no hand but his
Can play upon it, for its magic spell
Makes all the seasons blossom and decay."
But Lugh said: — "I will play upon this harp."
So it was given to him.
And first he played
Music of life and joy, whereat, outside,
The birds began to sing a morning song
As though the sun were rising, and the dew
Lay light upon the grass. And from the sward

Sprang crimson flowers, waving in the breeze,
Touching each other with a faery sound,
Like silver bells. Then those inside the dun
Felt laughter in their hearts and subtle joy
And gladness they had never felt before,
So that they wished the sound would never cease,
And they might die a-listening! Then he played
The music of the sorrow of the world,
And grief and tears possessed the souls of all.
They leaned their heads upon their hands, and wept,
And all the weight and burden of their lives
Fell on them till they prayed for death's surcease.
Outside, they heard a lonesome wind make moan
And where the grass and twinkling flow'rs had been
They saw a dark and leaden sea whose waves
Made woesome sound, like mourners clapping hands
While all the stars grew dim.
The harper paused
And then he played the music of sweet peace,
And o'er the earth there fell what seemed like snow
That settled flake by flake, and on the grass
Turned into crystal dews. Thus flake by flake
The quiet of the Land of Silver Fleece
Settled upon the minds of all men there,
And sorrow they forgot; they closed their eyes
And each slept in his seat. Then Lugh laid by
The magic harp and stole from out the dun
With noiseless feet. The magic snow still dropt
And on his shoulders shone like silver scales;

And on the thick bronze curlings of his hair
It flashed like jeweled fire and filled the air
With gracious radiance.
So Lugh went back
Unto his young companions in the wood,
And drowsy night enshadowed Usna's Hill.

IV

The sun had risen in the morning sky
When the De Danaan woke within the dun;
Joyous and glad they were, and what had passed
They deemed to be a strange and wondrous dream.
And Nuadha the king spoke cheerfully: —
"The Fomor have not quenched God's blessed sun.
Let us go out and make on Usna's height
A valiant stand. "They took their weapons then
And marched to Usna's Hill; nor were they long
Upon its summit ere the Fomor came
And jeered at them, and bade them all descend
And bow before their masters. But the king
Cried out, "We will not bow before you hence,
For ye are vile and ugly, nor are ye
Our lords, or lords of Erin from this day."

Then with hoarse shouts the fierce Fomorians
Attacked the hill, and Nuadha withstood
With dauntless front that first terrific charge.
But as their weapons clashed a blinding light
Appeared on the horizon, and the sound
Of screaming battle trumpets cleft the air.
No man could gaze upon that radiance

As crimson streamers shot into the skies.
Then cried the Fomor: — "'Tis a second sun
Rising to blind us; but the Danaan said: —
"Young Lugh is coming — The Deliverer."
And out of that great light the fairy troop
From Tir-na-n'og came riding, At their head
Rode Lugh, with flaming helmet and cuirass,
And Mananan's white charger he bestrode,
Bare in his hand the awful Sword of Light
Burned as he swoopt upon the Fomor lines.

As falls the swift sea-eagle on his prey,
Or as the jagged lightning strikes a tree
And burns and blasts it; as the stubble dry
In droughty autumns is consumed by fire,
So did the warriors from Tir-na-n'og
Destroy the Fomor until only nine
Were left alive. Then Lugh said to the nine: —
"Bow down and show obeisance to the king,
And to the Danaan Race, for they are lords
Of ye and of all Erin. Then go hence
To Tir-Fo-Tonn the Land of Under Wave
And say to Balor of The Evil Eye,
Your Fomor monarch, that the Danaan Race
Have taken back their own, and will wage war
Against the Fomor till not one is left
Of his misshapen brood to darken earth
With their foul shadows."
Then Lugh lifted up
The Sword of Light, and chanted a wild rann,
While lightnings crackled on his weapon's edge

And all the air was filled with singing birds,
Red blossoms covered all the naked trees,
And flowers strewed the fields. The Danaan folk
Shouted rejoicing till the forests shook,
And all the seas of Erin heard that shout,
And all the stars flung back the name of Lugh!

MARCH OF THE ULTONIANS

(A fragment from the Cuchulain Saga)

RESTED at Slane the Army of the West,
And slumber wrapped the camp; — but in his sleep
Cormac Conlongas started from his couch,
Grasping his axe, and babbling that he saw
A field red-heapt with slaughter! After that
Dubhtach, the "Ulster Beetle," cried aloud.
The two had dreamt of strife, and soon would sound
The stormy clash of shields.
Then fell o'er all
Uneasy fear, and banished was their sleep.
Now when the morning broke, King Ailell spoke:
"Cuailne and Ulster we have harried long,
While the great Northern armies lay entranced,
O'ercome by Druid spells, and Conchobar
Moaned in his troubled dreams. Good share of spoils
We carry with us from their plundered lands;
Now is it time that homeward to Magh Ai
Our chariots turned; but ere we westward wheel,
Glance let us take across the Meathian plain
In search of foeman; for 'tis surely meet
A King should combat, nor all times retreat."
Then forth they sent the herald, keen MacRoth,
Who climbed a nearby hill and searched afar

With eagle eye; — and soon there came a noise
Like falling of the skies upon the land,
Or roaring of the ocean bursting bounds,
Or myriad mighty trees that crashing down
In wintry tempest make the forests shake!
Then back he went to Ailell and to Mave,
Telling his story, and they quick enquired: —
"What else hast seen? And answer made Mac-
Roth: —
"I saw a gray mist far across the plain,
And a white flurry like the falling snow,
And through the mist what looked like sparks of
fire,
Or the cold stars upon a frosty night."

Then Ailell unto Fergus: — "Famed MacRoy,
Unfold to us the meaning of those signs."
And Fergus said: "The mist was rolling dust
Before the march of Ulster; — what seemed snow
Was foam flakes from their champing horses' bits,
Tossed by the breeze of motion; and the stars
Fierce gleaming of ten thousand angry eyes
'Neath brazen helmets."
Then spoke Connacht Mave: —
"Light do we reckon them, for we have here
Strong fighting-men to stem that raging tide!
Let them come on, Cuchulain at their head!
Their charge shall crumble on our Connacht line
Like the hoarse seas upon our Western shore; —
Form ranks, and let a thousand warpipes play
The 'Graves of Inver,' Ulster's funeral march!"

SONNETS

THE OGHAM PILLAR-STONE

IT stands upon a slope of Western shore
  Where lonely winds caress it day and night;
  The evening shadows and the morning light
Strike on its rune-lined angles, and the roar
Of the near sea — whose billows evermore
  Surge in — makes music round its ancient
    site!
  The curlew, calling sadly in his flight,
Utters his plaintive anthem o'er and o'er!

Aeons have passed and left no mark or trace
  Since this mysterious monument was raised;
Firbolg and Fomor and the Danaan race
  Have gazed upon these symbols, sore
    amazed;
Still do they mutely question earth and sky,
And but the Druid winds give heed and sigh!

THE HURLER

(This sonnet is dedicated to Richard "Drug" Walsh, Moondharrig, to Tom Semple, of Thurles, and to James Kelliher, of Dungourney.)

UPON his native sward the Hurler stands
To play the ancient pastime of the Gael,
And all the heroes famed of Innisfail
Are typified in him — I see the bands
Of the Croabh Ruadh applauding with their hands,
The Fianna shouting over Cliu Mail —
Oisin and Finn with eager faces pale,
Caoilte and Goll are there from fairy lands

And fierce Cuchulain comes — his godlike face
With yearning wild to grip in hand once more
The lithe camawn and drive the hurtling ball.
In Walsh's, Kelliher's and Semple's grace
He sees again his glorious youth of yore
And mourns his dead compeers, and Ferdia's fall.

KILLARNEY

FAIR Erin's guardian Spirit lingers here
Beneath the shadow of these purple hills:
She sings beside those ever-brimming rills,
And mirrors in those lakes the smile and tear;
Here, hand-in-hand with Beauty, all the year,
She answers back sweet Echo's voice that thrills
Th' impassioned dawn, when Erin's music fills
The vales with sounds that haunt th' enraptured ear!

Long have her songs to minor chords been set,
And sadness was their theme; but now no more
Shall past defeats her bouyant spirit fret,
Or clouds oppress her from the night of yore;
But, like Killarney's waters glad and free,
Her soul shall leap to meet the years to be!

THE VIKINGS

THEIR long ships, hungry for the sportive wave,
Lay on the beach; and so they left their fields.
And ringed them with a thousand brazen shields,
Then sought the Orkney coasts where wild seas rave
And tempests roar o'er many a Norseman's grave!
Thence down on Britain's fertile shores they swept,
Where goodly towns and shires their prowess wept,
While golden spoils they took, and trappings brave.

Raid after raid on England's strands they made
And Ireland's plains; but soon the reckoning came,
When Brian in his tent at Clontarf prayed,
And his brave army, like a searing flame,
Smote them and hurled them from fair Erin's shore
And whelmed their raven flag forevermore!

THE ROUND TOWER OF DEVENISH ISLAND

WHO builded thee in the far-distant past,
And set thee on this bleak and barren shore,
To hear for aye the ocean's solemn roar,
And quiver, harp-like, to the mournful blast?
Around thy grim stones fairy spells are cast,
And when the lambent moon her silver store
Of beams has scattered on thine earthen floor,
Strange elves come there and dance in measure fast!

But when White Dawn comes stealing like a ghost,
She sees thee as a hoary Druid crowned
With misty mantle. All along the coast
Glad waves rush in with tribute, vestal-gowned;
Once more thy dialed shadow points the way,
And thine own sun god greets his temple gray.

TARA

A LOW, round hill with earthen mounds o'erspread,
Covered with waving grass and purpling heath,
Looks down upon the rolling plains of Meath —
And this is Tara — all its glory fled —
Here Kings and Chieftains met in muster dread,
And famous champions sought the victor's wreath,
While music from the pulsing harp did breathe
To laud the living and extol the dead!

Now sounds no harp by Tara's crumbling walls;
Like Tyre and Nineveh in dust it sits,
The plaintive curlew o'er it sadly calls,
And the gray bat above its ruin flits;
But when the midnight wind makes mournful sigh,
Then ghosts of mighty heroes gather nigh!

FINGAL'S CAVE

HERE where the furious ocean rushes in
From wild Tiree and desolate Skerryvore,
Shaking with thunder all that iron shore,
Drowning the sea birds' cries with deafening din,
Nature has built a monument to Fin,
The son of Cool. And thro' its open door
Tho' wave and wind shall batter evermore,
Never his fortress can they hold or win.

So is it with the spirit of the Gael:
Tho' all the jealous nations should conspire
In angry onslaught, they shall ever fail
To break its purpose or to quench its fire;
The earth shall rock, the sun in heaven grow pale
Ere Gaelic strength and chivalry retire.

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